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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
MONDAY, JULY 6, 2009

In Today's Papers

President Gul Holds Phone Conversation With U.S. President Obama  
AA, Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, CNN Turk, and others: President Gul held a phone conversation with President Obama on Sunday. Mainstream Hurriyet says that the phone conversation was held on the eve of Obama's trip to Moscow. According to the White House, the two leaders focused on bilateral and regional issues, including U.S. relations with Muslim societies in the world, the situation in the Caucasus, Turkish-Armenian relations, and the Upper Karabakh issue. Mainstream Sabah reports the phone conversation took place "hours before Obama's visit to Moscow." Mainstream Milliyet writes, "Before (Obama) Hit The Road, He Spoke with Gul," to discuss "relations between Turkey and Armenia," and also Gul took the opportunity "to thank Obama for his Cairo speech to the Muslim world." Mainstream Haberturk notes, "Before Obama departed, he spoke to Gul."

Sabah Reports on A New Plan to Eliminate The PKK  
Saturday's mainstream Sabah reveals a plan by the U.S., Iraq and Turkey for the liquidation of PKK. Rights and Freedoms Party (Hak-Par) leader Bayram Bozyel talked to Sabah on the issue following his contacts in the region. According to Bozyel, the U.S., Turkey and Iraq have agreed on a four-step plan. The first step in the plan is the evacuation of refugees living in Mahmour camp in northern Iraq. 10,000 refugees in the camp will be brought to Turkey. After the evacuation, PKK members from the Quandil mountain will settle in the Mahmur camp and will be disarmed there. The PKK leaders will be given Iraqi passports and will be sent to European Countries, mainly to Norway. Parallel to this process, Turkey will prepare a new solution package which will contain amnesty for some PKK members as well. Bozyel said the meetings between Turkey, the U.S. and Iraq continues and passports for the leaders are being prepared. Stressing the importance of the roles of Barzani and Talabani at this process, Bozyel said "There are ongoing meetings with the PKK in different levels which the state keeps secret. The process of issuing passports and transferring the PKK leaders to Europe is easy. But, Turkey should announce the package soon. The PKK leaders also support this plan."

Three Alternatives for President Gul  
Mainstreams Aksam and Sabah report that all eyes are turned to

President Gul for the approval of a bill allowing civilian courts to try military personnel. Aksam highlights President Gul's options - he could approve the law but at the same time urge the government to make arrangements for the trial of top military officials; he might veto some of the provisions in the draft to demand arrangements giving immunity to the Chief of the General Staff and high-ranked military commanders; or Gul might approve the bill and state that the bill is in harmony with the constitution.

#### Editorial Commentary on the Controversial Bill

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal Radikal: "TGS has submitted to President Gul its objections to the bill for the trial of army officials by civilian courts. According to the military, the law contradicts the constitution. Second, the military believes that passage of the law will lead to clashes between the military and the civilian judiciary. In addition, the military believes its intelligence activities will become vulnerable to investigations launched by civilian prosecutors in connection with ungrounded complaints. This in turn might pave the way for the politicization of the army. The military is concerned that army officials might become target of ungrounded complaints similar to the complaint that led to the arrest of Col. Cicek."

Fikret Bila wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "According to the army sources the plan for fighting fundamentalism was not drafted in the General Staff by military officials. They say that the plan was drafted by civilians. This is why they need the cooperation with the civilian judiciary to find out the truth about the plan. The arrest and release of Col. Cicek is related to a complaint letter written to the Istanbul prosecutor. Because of this letter, he was summoned

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as a suspect linked to the Ergenekon network."

#### Armenian FM Nalbandyan Comments on the Border Opening

ANKA News Agency: Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandyan said over the weekend, "Borders with Turkey can open once an unconditional agreement is reached in the direction." Nalbandyan also noted, "We expect Turkey to take the practical steps" but noted Turkey "has not" taken such steps.

#### Chief Negotiator on Turkey's EU Membership

AA: In response to Greek FM Bakoyannis' remarks to the Greek press that, "Greece has supported Turkey's EU membership from the outset but Greece's thesis is clear. Besides those eight chapters there are other issues on the table and Turkey should fulfill its obligations," Turkey's Chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis said "Turkey is aware of its responsibilities on the road to the Union. Also Turkey has the right to expect its interlocutors to fulfill their responsibilities and liabilities." In addition, Bagis noted "In contrast to our Greek friends, Cyprus is not the only item on our agenda."

#### Editorial Commentary on Turkey-US and Turkey- Iran Ties

Omer Taspinar wrote in mainstream Sabah: "While Turkey is dealing with critical discussions regarding military-civilian issues, Washington has two different opinions on Turkey. One side dislikes the AKP and sees a significant danger that Turkey is headed toward a more and more Islamist state. The second group is slightly more positive and they believe they need to win Turkey back after it was lost during the Bush administration. This group works closely with Obama and Clinton. This camp is primarily concerned with Turkey's EU bid and democratic reforms, not Islam. They think the only way forward for Turkey is the EU harmonization process and Turkey should not waste time. Turkey should follow the EU reform path."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "As international interest grows regarding the situation in Iran, there is active disinterest towards Iran by Turkey. It seems that Turkey will follow a low profile policy towards Iran in order to prevent any political tension. Following President Gul's visit to Tehran, Ahmedinejad's commented, "Tehran doesn't want Turkey to mediate between the U.S. and Iran," and the Iranian leader noted, "The only choice for Turkey is to sit quietly and hope that developments in Iran won't affect Turkey negatively."

## An Historic Summit in Moscow Launches A New Beginning for U.S.-Russia Relations

Media feature U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Moscow as the lead international story, and particular emphasis is placed on the hope that the summit will improve relations between the U.S. and Russia. Islamist-oriented Zaman writes, "Obama's long-awaited visit to Moscow begins today." Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "This Is The Time For Mutual Understanding," and the paper notes, "Obama's visit to Moscow will begin a new period for relations between the U.S. and Russia." Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "The Summit To End Bush-ism and Putin-ism," as the summit marks, "A new era in relations between Russia and the U.S." Mainstream Sabah reports in "A New Start With An Historic Summit," that, "Obama wants to bring a new beginning to U.S. relations with Russia," as "the two countries will discuss a number of issues in what is seen as 'an historical opportunity.'" Meanwhile, leftist Taraf comments in "A Nuclear Agreement Is Still Not Ready," that, "the two countries are still working to reach an agreement that will decrease their nuclear armament suspicions." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak also has a different take on the issue in "Obama Shows His Official 'Target,'" during his Moscow visit, which the paper comments is Iran.

## The U.S. Won't Stand in Israel's Way

Media draw attention to U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's comments in Iraq regarding the U.S. stance on a possible Israeli military strike against Iran. Mainstream Vatan interprets Vice President Biden's

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remarks as, "a green light" to Israel under the headline, "If Israel Wants To Strike Iran, (The U.S.) Will Not Oppose It." Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "A Green Light from Biden To Israel for An Iran Operation." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet calls Biden's remarks, "Promises from VP Biden that are creating anxieties." Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "The U.S. Won't Say Anything to Israel If They Strike Iran." Mainstream Sabah notes, "The U.S. Won't Stand in Israel's Way." Liberal Radikal points out that Biden's comments were followed by Saudi Arabia's announcement that "Riyadh gave a guarantee to Israel to use Saudi airspace in an attack against Iran." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak calls Biden's comments, "Approval from The U.S. to Israel," for an Israeli attack against Iran.

## TV News (CNN Turk)

### Domestic

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- The Turkish Board of Statistics (TUIK) conducted a survey on 6465 people and showed that 51.9 percent of Turkish people would vote for EU membership if a referendum was held. Only 29.5 percent would vote against EU membership.

- Turkey will start warning smokers both in written and visual on packages as of 2010.

- Three village guards were injured in a mine blast in Sirnak.

### World

- Independence Day celebrations in New York begin with the Statue of Liberty's crown opening to the public for the first time since September 11.

- The Organization of American States agrees to suspend Honduras over the coup.

- Two NATO Service members were killed in a bombing in southern Afghanistan. JEFFREY